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# Security Council

Fifty-eighth year

*Provisional*

**4823rd meeting**

Friday, 12 September 2003, 11.35 a.m.
New York

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| *President:* | Sir Emyr Jones Parry | (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) |
| *Members:* | Angola | Mr. Gaspar Martins |
| | Bulgaria | Mr. Tafrov |
| | Cameroon | Mr. Tidjani |
| | Chile | Mr. Maquieira |
| | China | Mr. Zhang Yishan |
| | France | Mrs. D'Achon |
| | Germany | Mr. Pleuger |
| | Guinea | Mr. Sow |
| | Mexico | Mr. Aguilar Zinser |
| | Pakistan | Mr. Khalid |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Gatilov |
| | Spain | Ms. Menéndez |
| | Syrian Arab Republic | Mr. Atieh |
| | United States of America | Mr. Cunningham |

## Agenda

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

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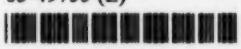

*The meeting was called to order at 11.35 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)**

**The President**: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Albania, Italy and Serbia and Montenegro, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

*At the invitation of the President, Mr. Šahović (Serbia and Montenegro) took a seat at the Council table. Mr. Nesho (Albania) and Mr. Spatafora (Italy) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.*

**The President**: In order to optimize the use of our time, I will not individually invite speakers to take seats at the Council table. When a speaker is taking the floor, the Conference Officer will seat the next speaker on the list at the table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Hédi Annabi, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Annabi to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I would like to appeal to all those who intend to speak — and it is a very formidable list —for as much brevity as possible, please. And if colleagues have already made points, it would be hugely appreciated, not just by the Chair but by other colleagues, if we could show agreement with what has been said and forego the urge to repeat it. I say that because it is the intention of the presidency, in response to a formal request that we have received, to convene this afternoon at 3 p.m. at the ambassadorial level in formal consultations on the situation in the Middle East. Given the agenda we have today — this is no disrespect whatever to this item — I think a measure of brevity would help us all.

I now invite Mr. Annabi, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to brief the Council on the current situation with respect to the item on the agenda.

**Mr. Annabi**: Thank you, Mr. President, for giving us the opportunity to brief the Council on developments in Kosovo over the past two months. During this period, Mr. Holkeri took up his responsibilities as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General. Upon his arrival in Priština, Mr. Holkeri held a first round of meetings with representatives of the Kosovo Provisional Institutions and local political leaders from all communities. Mr. Holkeri also had meetings with the political leadership in Belgrade.

The Special Representative has reaffirmed the commitment of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to the "standards before status" policy framework and its focus on progress towards achieving the benchmarks for implementation of this policy. Mr. Holkeri is also preparing an operational plan for the implementation of the benchmarks, which is being drawn up jointly by UNMIK and the Kosovo Provisional Institutions.

Mr. Holkeri has strongly emphasized the importance of initiating direct and constructive dialogue on practical matters of mutual interest between Priština and Belgrade. During his meetings with representatives of the Kosovo Provisional Institutions and the political leadership in Belgrade, Mr. Holkeri sought their respective views on issues relating to the proposed dialogue. He consistently underlined during those discussions that the dialogue should focus on concrete issues which serve the needs of the people and are in the interests of all sides. Preparations for this dialogue are under way, and Mr.

Holkeri is planning to propose modalities for the dialogue in the coming weeks.

With regard to the security situation, the period since July has been characterized by a number of violent attacks and shootings, which have occurred throughout Kosovo, primarily targeting the Kosovo Serb community, as well as UNMIK law enforcement authorities.

As we informed the Council on 13 August, two Kosovo Serb youths were killed and four injured in a shooting incident aimed at those youths, who were swimming in a river near the village of Gorazdevac in the Peć region. On 18 August, a Kosovo Serb male, who had been shot in the head on 11 August, died of his wounds. Two Kosovo Serbs were also injured in a shooting on 26 August at the returns site of Bica, near Klina in the Peć region. On 31 August, four Kosovo Serbs were injured and one killed in an explosive attack in the village of Cernica in the Gnjilane region. UNMIK Police and KFOR have increased security in these areas following the incidents and are continuing to investigate those crimes.

All Kosovo political leaders made statements condemning the attacks and inviting the public to help find the perpetrators. The Special Representative, Mr. Holkeri, called upon them to show greater resolve in calling for an end to violence and in using their authority to support all efforts to bring the perpetrators to justice. The Special Representative has also appealed to the general public to do all it can to assist the law enforcement authorities in efforts to apprehend those responsible for the incidents.

Those violent incidents have further raised feelings of insecurity among Kosovo Serbs, and there have been signs of an increase in inter-ethnic tension. Although protests against the incidents in Kosovo Serb communities have largely been peaceful, there have been instances of intimidation and harassment in both Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb communities. In addition, many regular inter-ethnic meetings and multi-ethnic events have been cancelled or boycotted by Kosovo Serb and/or Kosovo Albanian representatives out of fear for their security. The past two months have also seen an increase in violent incidents directed against UNMIK law enforcement personnel and property. On 3 August, an UNMIK international police officer was murdered in a sniper attack in the northern part of Kosovo. On 6 September, an off-duty Kosovo Police Service (KPS) officer was also murdered near Djakovica. On 10 September, another KPS officer was shot and injured in Priština, and a person who was with him was killed.

Property used by the police and judiciary, including an UNMIK police station, UNMIK vehicles and the Priština district court, were damaged in explosions and other attacks. No one has claimed responsibility for any of these attacks. The majority of local politicians and representatives of the Provisional Institutions have made statements condemning the incidents.

Some of those attacks came after the conviction, on 16 July, of four former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) members for war crimes committed primarily against fellow Kosovo Albanians during 1998 and 1999. The decision was the first conviction of former KLA members for war crimes. The initial negative reaction among the general public and local media coverage subsided quickly.

On 4 September, inmates of the Dubrava Prison, which is Kosovo's largest detention facility, occupied a prison block in protest against living conditions, and refused to return to their cells, despite reassurances from UNMIK officials that their complaints would be addressed and that no disciplinary action would be taken against them. Following the prison guards' attempt to enter the occupied block, the prisoners set fire to their mattresses. Five prisoners died and a further 16 were injured in the ensuing fire. A police investigation into the incident was launched immediately, and an independent inquiry will look into its causes and provide recommendations.

As regards political developments, owing to the summer recess the period has seen a lull in legislative and Government activity in Priština. The Kosovo Assembly reconvened on 4 September. Since July, the Government has focused on legislative development and the security situation. It has not taken up the initiation of direct dialogue with Belgrade.

On 27 August, the Serbian Parliament endorsed a "declaration on Kosovo and Metohija", and on 5 September the Parliament of Serbia and Montenegro adopted a "resolution on Kosovo and Metohija". Kosovo Albanian leaders were critical of these documents, particularly the references to Kosovo's status. Kosovo Albanian leaders have also stated that such moves have strained chances of direct dialogue

with Belgrade. On 3 September the Kosovo Government publicly expressed its concern over the adoption of the Serbian declaration, and stated its intention to build an independent State.

With regard to returns and inter-ethnic relations, although the level of returns remains low, minority returns continue to exceed those in 2002. In the past two months, some promised funding from several major donors was received, and work on returns projects began. In addition, almost 150 cases have been referred to the Rapid Response Returns Facility, which is a joint project by UNMIK and the United Nations Development Programme providing housing reconstruction assistance for individual returnees. The security situation has, however, heightened the level of fear within the Serb community, leading to delays in returns efforts and the possibility that more returns might be postponed until next spring.

Kosovo's political leaders have expressed support for returns, including — as previously reported — through an open letter published on 2 July in Kosovo's major dailies in which they encouraged displaced persons of all ethnicities to return. On 10 July, the Kosovo Assembly also held a session dedicated to minority returns and adopted a resolution backing returns and emphasizing the need for Kosovo's Government to support return and reintegration activities. On 21 August, Kosovo Prime Minister Rexhepi committed to funding 7 million euros for return activities from the 2002 Kosovo Consolidated Budget surplus funds, and emphasized that this contribution by the Provisional Institutions was intended to demonstrate the Government's commitment to minority communities in the wake of the recent security incidents.

Kosovo President Rugova and Prime Minister Rexhepi have also travelled to returns sites to show their public support for the returns process. However, statements and concrete support for returns at the central level have not, by and large, been replicated at the municipal level. Cooperation on returns projects has been productive in a number of municipalities, but the actions of some municipal officials in the areas affected by violence against Kosovo Serbs have not been conducive to reconciliation.

Turning to local self-government, political infighting — primarily between Kosovo Albanian parties — in a number of municipalities continued to negatively affect the ability of local authorities to deliver effective local government. Also, financing for minority communities from municipal budgets remains poor and, as of the end of June, only six of Kosovo's 26 mixed municipalities had met their required fair-share financing levels in the areas of municipal administration, health and education. UNMIK is working with the Kosovo Ministry of Finance and Economy on developing modalities to address this outstanding problem.

In Mitrovica UNMIK has focused on promoting inter-ethnic activities and dialogue. However, Kosovo Serb members of the northern Mitrovica advisory board have not yet started participating officially in the meetings.

With regard to the economy, bids for the two successive sets of tenders for the privatization of socially owned enterprises were opened by the Kosovo Trust Agency on 14 July and 2 September. A total of 24 enterprises have now been tendered for privatization, and the amount in bids received has reached over 29 million euros. On 6 September, the first three contracts for the privatization of socially owned enterprises were signed. On 1 July, the second meeting of the Kosovo stabilization and association process tracking mechanism took place in Priština. During the meeting, European Commission experts, UNMIK and the Provisional Institutions discussed aspects of justice and home affairs, media policy, telecommunications and transport policy, and made recommendations to ensure conformity with established European Union norms and standards.

UNMIK and KFOR have continued to take action against suspected extremist elements in the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC). An enquiry is ongoing in order to identify those members of the KPC with possible links to extremist organizations and criminal groups. Following interviews with 50 members of the KPC, a total of 18 officers have been recommended for dismissal. One of the 18 has already resigned and a second has been dismissed for a separate disciplinary offence. The head of the KPC has suspended a further seven of those on the list, referring the cases to UNMIK police for further investigation.

In conclusion, I wish to say that, under Mr. Holkeri's leadership, UNMIK will remain committed to fully implementing Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and to working with all interlocutors to achieve progress on the benchmarks within the "standards before status" policy framework. A priority at this time is to initiate the dialogue on practical matters of mutual concern between Priština and Belgrade. Through that dialogue practical benefits can be realized for the people of Kosovo, with a view to developing an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence. Mr. Holkeri is actively engaged in pursuing this matter in consultation with all parties concerned. At the same time, he is trying to manage the competing interests and unilateral pronouncements of parties concerned, which are not always conducive to the initiation of that dialogue. We also remain concerned about the security situation in Kosovo. In that connection, we shall continue to emphasize the need for everyone to do their part in stopping the violence. The Council's continued and active support has been, and will continue to be, crucial in realizing those objectives.

**The President**: I have 18 speakers on my list. I would like to suggest to colleagues to aim to conclude by 1 p.m. That would actually be quite a sensible objective. If that were acceptable, the logical consequence would allow three minutes, on average, per intervention. I state those two facts, and I will now go through the list. But I shall live in hope.

**Mr. Khalid** (Pakistan): I will start right away. First of all, I thank Mr. Annabi for his briefing.

During last month's meeting on this subject we welcomed Mr. Holkeri's assumption of the post of Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Kosovo. He has taken over his responsibilities at what no doubt is a difficult and crucial time, given the recent murders in Gorazdevac and increasing ethnic tensions in Kosovo.

In the interest of time, I shall just confine my comments to the mandate of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the role that it should play in Kosovo.

UNMIK is a unique mission in many respects. While it is a peacekeeping mission, administration, capacity-building and development are among the vital components of its mandate. Given those responsibilities and its finite resources and capacities, UNMIK therefore needs to develop a clearly focused, but realistic, policy agenda. In developing any policy initiative, UNMIK must consult local government officials and gain their confidence. No such initiatives are likely to succeed fully without the ownership of Kosovar officials.

In that regard, some of the issues UNMIK must urgently address include security and the rule of law. There is also a need to reinvigorate the Transfer Council and to utilize it to incorporate officials from the Provisional Institutions in areas of UNMIK's reserved authority. UNMIK should also allow Kosovo Government officials to manage some of the budgetary and financial responsibilities, in line with chapter 5 of the Constitutional Framework. In addition to giving greater autonomy to the Provisional Institutions, UNMIK must also work proactively to promote the socio-economic development and reconstruction of Kosovo. In the long run, all political achievements in Kosovo can easily be undermined by inadequate economic recovery.

The comments I have just made are aimed at enabling UNMIK to improve its performance. At the same time, we will continue to urge UNMIK to make whatever progress that can be made in terms of building confidence between different communities, the return of refugees and the protection of minorities. We also encourage UNMIK to continue to work for greater dialogue, at least initially on administrative matters between Belgrade and Priština. We hope that, in due course, those and other measures will create the necessary environment to begin progress on the difficult, yet important, issue of status.

**Mr. Gatilov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to Assistant Secretary-General Hédi Annabi for his substantive briefing on the situation in Kosovo. Russia's views on the processes under way in the province are well known, and very much agree with the assessments voiced by Mr. Annabi.

We believe that, despite certain advances that have, to a great extent, been achieved by virtue of international efforts, the situation in the province continues to be a complex one. Implementation is lacking with regard to key requirements of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), particularly with respect to the situation of Kosovo's non-Albanian inhabitants and the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. There is neither reliable nor

equitable safety for all of the province's population. There is an absence of fundamental freedoms and rights and inter-ethnic tolerance. Only weak efforts are under way to combat local and cross-border crime and corruption.

Regrettably, over the last month Kosovo has once again been engulfed by a crime wave that has clear ethnic underpinnings. The most blatant of those acts was the armed attack of 13 August against Serbian school children in Gorazdevac. Participants in the meeting of the Contact Group held in Moscow on 4 September issued a statement condemning that barbaric act as well as other incidents in Kosovo that have produced victims among the civilian population. Such acts of violence have no justification under any circumstances. Murder is the instrument of terrorism, and those who perpetrate such crimes are murderers. That must be said straight out.

We cannot stand by idly as terrorists attempt to destabilize the situation in individual countries and entire regions. With regard to Kosovo, there is no doubt that this has to do with yet another manifestation of terrorism that, given the realities in Kosovo, is particularly dangerous, as it increases tensions in an already complex inter-ethnic relationship. Such incidents could provoke a chain reaction with extremely negative consequences for a settlement in the province.

We note the steps taken by the international presences aimed at apprehending the criminals and bringing them to trial. We are grateful to the head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Mr. Holkeri, for his prompt reactions to events. We are certain that the leaders of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government and leading Kosovo politicians will provide active assistance to the investigations and reaffirm in practice their commitment to their declared goal of building a multi-ethnic, democratic society in the province.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General faces complex challenges in restoring the multi-ethnic nature of the province. We support the priorities he has identified, including normalizing the situation in the province, ensuring the rule of law, resolving problems related to the return of refugees and internally displaced persons, and economic recovery.

Of key importance are the implementation of the principle of standards before status, which seeks to ensure the essential basic democratic conditions in Kosovo and the establishment of appropriate mechanisms to that end. The implementation of these obligations must be under continuous international oversight.

The achievement of these goals will be furthered by the prompt launching, with constructive international assistance, of a direct dialogue between Belgrade and Priština on technical issues of mutual interest. We believe that the primary mediation role in this process must be played by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, in close cooperation with the Contact Group and the European Union.

We urge UNMIK to assume a more active and consistent position in countering any manifestations of inter-ethnic intolerance and crime, to stem the growth of radical movements in the province and to consolidate legality there. The meeting in Moscow of the Contact Group, with the involvement of Mr. Holkeri, confirmed the convergence of approaches of all the essential international participants in the settlement towards the order and substance of measures to be taken in this field. We note in particular the clearly established consensus view that any discussion on the future status of Kosovo would be premature at this juncture and that any attempt to prejudice the resolution of this issue would be unacceptable.

For its part, Russia intends actively to continue participating in overall efforts to seek a just, balanced and lasting solution to the Kosovo problem.

**Mr. Tafrov** (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank Mr. Annabi for his very factual and comprehensive briefing and to reiterate my country's full support for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Holkeri. We again call on all parties to cooperate with him in his extremely complex and difficult task.

As a country associated with the European Union, Bulgaria fully supports the statement to be made shortly on behalf of the Union by the Ambassador of Italy. As a country of the region, located in close proximity to Kosovo, Bulgaria wishes to make a few additional comments.

Bulgaria once again categorically condemns the acts of violence referred to earlier by Mr. Annabi, in which innocent people, including a police officer, were

killed. We convey our condolences to India. Bulgaria believes that all such acts are acts of ethnic violence and that attacks on the representatives of international institutions in the province merely undermine the efforts of local and international actors working for Kosovo's future and to normalize life for all its inhabitants. Bulgaria again recalls that such acts can in no way improve the positions of parties to negotiations, merely delay the normalization process and serve the interests only of the very few who thrive on disorder and organized crime. Violence is surely not in the interests of the legitimate political representatives in Kosovo, much less those of ordinary people.

That is why we believe that the full cooperation of the Kosovo Provisional Institutions of Self-Government with police investigations and the prosecution of the perpetrators of these acts of violence will provide evidence of their readiness to shoulder the burden of the genuine management of the province's affairs. In this respect, we would recall that Bulgaria remains very interested in the investigation of the murder of Valentin Krumov, a Bulgarian international civil servant killed in Priština in 1999.

Bulgaria continues to follow with interest and concern these acts of ethnic intolerance, which hamper reconciliation among the ethnic communities and the return of refugees to their homes. We believe that the international presence in Kosovo, especially that of the United Nations, must categorically demonstrate to all local actors, regardless of their ethnic origin, that such behaviour and the inspiration of violence are unacceptable and will not be tolerated by the international community.

**Mr. Cunningham** (United States of America): I will be brief, as you requested, Sir, but I do want to make a couple of points.

First, obviously we deplore and condemn the violence and attacks that have taken place in the last couple of months. I am afraid that this reminds all of us again of the primacy of establishing the rule of law in Kosovo. This is something that the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) is working hard to achieve and which I hope we all will support.

We believe that the way forward in general is to focus on proceeding with the standards before status approach. This appears to us to be well poised to go ahead. We encourage UNMIK and those involved to move ahead with it. The achievement of the standards that have been set out is essential to a better life for all Kosovars as we move forward and the United States, for its part, will continue to offer technical expertise to support that process.

We also urge the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to convene officials from Belgrade and Priština as soon as possible in order to begin a dialogue on practical matters. We think this is important. These talks should be held primarily at the level of technical experts and deal with practical issues of mutual concern, such as energy and transportation.

I would also like to note that unilateral comments or declarations by neighbouring Governments or parties inside Kosovo about Kosovo's future are premature and unhelpful. Attempts to prejudge final status only distract from the important work at hand of implementing the standards and beginning the direct dialogue on practical matters. That is where the focus should be, we believe. We hope that all leaders of the region will focus on helping Mr. Holkeri as he sets about his very important and complicated new tasks. That certainly is the intention of my Government.

**Mrs. D'Achon** (France) (*spoke in French*): I also thank Mr. Hédi Annabi for his very thorough briefing. France renews its firm condemnation of the acts of violence carried out in Kosovo this past month. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and certain delegations have categorized those acts as terrorist and their perpetrators as terrorists. Those crimes must not erode our determination to make progress in implementing Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), with the assistance of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the Kosovo Force (KFOR) and all concerned parties.

We must also continue the fight against organized crime. It is becoming a major scourge, and it constitutes a threat not only to the security of all the inhabitants of Kosovo, but also to regional stability and Europe as a whole.

The firm commitment of the self-governing provisional authorities of Kosovo is crucial to thwart the power of that type of crime. We will judge their ability to exercise their entrusted responsibilities in keeping with specific results.

The renewed violence also means that we need to remain vigilant in terms of the amount of international

force for security deployed in Kosovo. KFOR must continue to have sufficient means to meet its mission. I would recall here that France continues to be one of the leading troop contributors in Kosovo and that its soldiers are deployed in very exposed areas.

In that tense context, we reaffirm our full trust in and support for the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General to continue implementation of resolution 1244 (1999). We are convinced that the "standards before status" formula continues to be fully valid. As Mr. Annabi has stated, Mr. Holkeri will shortly make proposals to make those standards more operational. We have full confidence in him to define, together with the self-governing provisional authorities of Kosovo, the best way to advance, without delay, in areas such as the rule of law, public order, respect for minorities and the return of refugees and displaced persons.

Finally, we have full confidence in Mr. Holkeri to define the modalities by which there will at long last be established between Priština and Belgrade a direct, sustained dialogue on practical issues of common interests. We believe that that direct dialogue should help to specifically improve daily lives in Kosovo for all its inhabitants.

**Mr. Zinser** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation does not want to miss this opportunity to address members of the Council to express our deepest sorrow at the death of a great friend of Mexico, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Mrs. Anna Lindh. It is a deplorable loss, and we join in what other members of the Council have said.

We also thank Mr. Hédi Annabi for his briefing, analysing the latest developments in and prospects for consolidating peace in Kosovo.

Scarcely three weeks ago, the Council examined the topic that we are addressing today. On that occasion, we met as the result of a criminal act aimed against the principle establishing multi-ethnicity as the formula for coexistence within the province. On 26 August, near Klina in the Peć region, another armed attack was carried out against the Serbian minority. On 31 August, there were two explosions in the town of Cernica, leaving one person dead and three wounded. My delegation condemns once again those types of acts and wishes to share its deep concern that those atrocities are recurring themes that we encounter every time that we discuss Kosovo.

For that reason, we wish to say that, in Mexico's opinion, the road to a prosperous and tolerant Kosovo, where law and respect for human rights prevail, is the road that the extremist groups do not want to take. Therefore, those types of acts that promote hatred and anarchy must be stopped.

The international community formed an outstanding strategic alliance with respect to Kosovo. Substantial human and financial resources and political will have been invested in the effort of reconstruction and reconciliation. That effort must be maintained, and we must achieve the objective set by the Security Council.

Therefore, the Council must not confine itself to condemning acts of violence. We must confront the causes that bring them about, as a first step, in order to implement later concrete strategies to prevent their recurrence in the future. Mexico considers that the strategy must be comprehensive, addressing simultaneously questions of education, security, development and the administration of justice.

In the area of education, activities and programmes must be promoted at all levels that foster mutual understanding of cultures, religions and customs and mutual feedback between ethnic groups as a basis for cultural understanding and coexistence. The normalization of life in the province is the responsibility of all Kosovars. There cannot be genuine coexistence while there is mistrust.

Regardless of ethnic origin or religious beliefs, all Kosovars are jointly responsible for forging that inclusive future. Accordingly, we must even more decisively support the promotion of the return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes under secure and normal conditions.

It is also necessary that the self-governing provisional institutions earn the trust and respect of the entire population, and the only way to do that is to work in accordance with the law, with transparency and a sense of equity and justice. In that context, Mexico has viewed as positive measures the recent suspension of seven members from the Kosovo Protection Corps and the disciplinary action against eight others on suspicions of links to organized crime and extremist groups.

Mexico notes with satisfaction the efforts undertaken by Mr. Harri Holkeri, Head of the United

Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), to initiate soon the Belgrade-Priština dialogue on practical issues. Forging a mechanism for direct dialogue will undoubtedly depend on progress being made in political, social and economic items for mutual understanding among all inhabitants of the province.

In conclusion, I wish to say that the illicit traffic in weapons and the volume of such weapons among the population of Kosovo is a source of concern and should become a cause of major attention by the Council. Mexico believes that the traffic in and the possession of weapons should be restricted to the full extent possible, since their very existence can promote social violence. We therefore welcome the third programme of arms amnesty, organized by the United Nations, which will be held in September.

In Mexico's view, to the extent that there exists in Kosovo a will for dialogue, there will be a future and irrational acts will be relegated to the past.

**Mr. Sow** (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): I should like to thank Mr. Annabi, whose detailed and comprehensive briefing will help us in our exchange of views on the development of the situation in Kosovo.

Four years after the temporary freezing of Kosovo's status, the record of the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in that province appears mixed, despite Mr. Holkeri's praiseworthy dedication. We must welcome the progress made at the political and administrative levels, but the recovery of the economy, the return of refugees and the restitution of property, as well as the establishment of the rule of law and the problem of security, remain sources of concern.

At the economic level, despite the improvement of the legislative and administrative framework, greater attention must be devoted to job creation and to promoting regional exchanges.

With regard to the return of refugees, the restitution of property and the issue of disappeared persons, we call for a strengthening of ongoing efforts aimed at the proper functioning of established mechanisms. In addition, the absence of dialogue among communities and the increase in inter-ethnic violence, crime and insecurity affect the long-sought restoration of the rule of law. The murders of civilians this summer, which we condemn and deplore, indicate to us that the situation is still not stable. Measures such as strengthening police and judicial structures are a priority. The reorganization and transformation of the Kosovo Protection Corps into a multi-ethnic body specializing in emergency interventions is also in keeping with that obligation.

Furthermore, my delegation notes that, in the framework of improving the current situation prevailing in Kosovo, other elements of key importance must be taken into consideration. Those are, inter alia, the dialogue between Priština and Belgrade; the regional approach; cooperation among UNMIK, Kosovo's elected officials and the Serbia and Montenegro authorities; extending UNMIK's authority throughout the province and, finally, mobilizing the resources essential for Kosovo's harmonious development.

We urge the parties to do their utmost to facilitate the opening of the negotiations planned for this fall between Belgrade and Priština.

Direct dialogue between the Serbian and Albanian communities must not remain wishful thinking; it must become a reality on the ground and be the driving force for peaceful development of the Balkans region.

I cannot conclude without emphasizing the paramount role that the various Kosovar components must play in the quest for solutions to the problems of the province. The effectiveness of the international community's support — which remains necessary — depends on that.

**Mr. Maquieira** (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Like previous speakers, I shall be brief. At the outset, I thank Mr. Annabi for his briefing, which informed us of Mr. Holkeri's activities in Kosovo. At our last meeting on this item we expressed our satisfaction at the assignment of Mr. Holkeri, who had an outstanding term as President of the General Assembly a number of years ago. We trust that the contacts Mr. Holkeri has established with a broad range of local political officials in Kosovo will bear the fruit wished for by everyone, in conformity with resolution 1244 (1999).

We believe that Kosovo today is at a crucial stage. On the one hand, we note significant progress in achieving a substantial degree of autonomy, especially the gradual transfer of authority and of non-reserved responsibilities, in keeping with chapter 5 of the

Constitutional Framework. That process must continue. However, a series of deplorable acts of violence — all occurring during the period in question — resulting in deaths and injuries would seem to continue to tarnish the process. We condemn those acts of violence in the most emphatic terms.

In addition to voicing our concern at those violent incidents and at crimes against minorities, we should like to say that in our view they must not and cannot derail the peace process. All manifestations of ethnically motivated violence, harassment and discrimination run counter to the achievement of a multi-ethnic Kosovo and violate the spirit of resolution 1244 (1999). We acknowledge the measures undertaken by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to find and bring to justice the perpetrators of those acts. We firmly believe that without the significant and sustainable return of internally displaced persons and refugees, the building of a multi-ethnic democratic society capable of integrating all of Kosovo's inhabitants is impossible.

We agree with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the implementation of a plan to operationalize the points of reference within the framework of the "standards before status" policy, and, in relation to Kosovo's final status, we call on the parties to avoid any implicit or explicit form of provocation.

Finally, we urge the parties to deepen and broaden the dialogue. We welcome Mr. Holkeri's statements concerning closer dialogue between Belgrade and Priština. Without that dialogue — or without dialogue between UNMIK and the Kosovo Assembly — the achievement of concrete results with respect to the major challenges is a distant prospect.

I hope I have kept within three minutes, Mr. President.

**Ms. Menéndez** (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Many thanks to Mr. Annabi. Italy will speak shortly on behalf of the European Union, so I shall confine myself to making three points.

First, less than a month ago, we met here and condemned the terrorist crime against Kosovo Serb children. Regrettably, we note that ethnic and political acts of violence have not ceased. We hope that the perpetrators will be prosecuted and convicted. The crimes committed cannot go unpunished. Kosovo's future depends on the establishment of security. Security is important for economic recovery, but it is also essential for building a democratic and tolerant society and for the process of the return of Kosovo's citizens of non-Albanian origin. In that connection, we hope that the open letter inviting displaced persons to return to Kosovo will translate into a reality.

Secondly, we hope that Mr. Holkeri enjoys success at the head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). He has our full support, but obviously he must also have the support and cooperation of the Priština and Belgrade authorities. We reiterate once again that we fully agree with the policy promoted by UNMIK, in conformity with the "standards before status" principle.

Thirdly and finally, we find the public statements of the political leaders to be very disturbing. Positions that are contrary to resolution 1244 (1999) cannot in any way be allowed to be publicly and constantly promoted. We condemn any attempt to create mono-ethnic institutions, and we call for the dismantling of any still-functioning parallel administrative structures. We must actively encourage participation in the Assembly and the Transfer Council by Kosovars of non-Albanian origin.

Spain hopes to see the appeal made in Thessaloniki for dialogue between Belgrade and Priština become a reality. The leaders of both parties must stop placing preconditions on that dialogue and must begin it as soon as possible.

**Mr. Gaspar Martins** (Angola): First of all, I should like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting and to thank Mr. Annabi for his briefing, which provided us with an update on the situation in Kosovo.

We regret that the meaningful progress achieved at the institutional level by the political process in Kosovo, with the gradual transfer of competencies to the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, is not matched by similar progress in the security sphere. The complex situation still faced by Kosovo is a matter of some concern.

My delegation strongly condemns the recent acts of violence. As briefed by Mr. Annabi this morning, the murder of children and the daily intimidation of vulnerable persons are an attack against the crucial process of democratic reforms. Those acts must not be

allowed to undermine the peace process and the efforts to build a multi-ethnic and democratic society in Kosovo. We appeal for an immediate end to violence.

We would like to underline that it is the responsibility of Kosovo leaders to decisively curb ethnic violence. We urge them to work with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) with a view to improving the security situation in Kosovo, particularly through the strengthening of local police and by adopting measures to fight organized crime.

We welcome the efforts undertaken by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Contact Group to stop the cycle of violence. In that regard, we deem it very important to push forward the disarmament of the population, taking advantage of the synergies provided by the amnesty programme recently started by UNMIK, which allows the citizens of Kosovo who possess illegal weapons to surrender them to law enforcement authorities. It is clear that the proliferation of weapons fosters violence, organized crime and terrorism.

It is important to continue to strengthen the rule of law, to support the return of refugees, to push forward on respect for minority rights and to press on with economic development. Those goals should continue to serve as priorities and should be promoted by all parties in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999) and the Constitutional Framework in order to build a multi-ethnic and tolerant community with a solid economic foundation and functioning democratic institutions.

My delegation also expresses its hope that the parties will deepen their commitment to democratic values and the rule of law; that the meaningful, constructive dialogue between Belgrade and Priština on practical matters of mutual interest takes place and will be further expanded to include political issues; and that concrete results are achieved without much delay.

To conclude, we wish to reiterate our full support for the "standards before status" policy. Its postulated targets are essential to the political process designed to determine Kosovo's future in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999), establishing a multi-ethnic and democratic society.

**Mr. Pleuger** (Germany): First, let me thank Assistant Secretary-General Hédi Annabi for his concise and very useful briefing. I should also like to point out that I associate myself with the statement that will be made by the Italian presidency of the European Union at a later stage in this meeting.

The series of violent incidents over the past weeks highlights the urgency of dialogue and reconciliation in Kosovo. We should not allow the actions of a few extremists and criminals to divert us from the task of creating a stable, peaceful and democratic Kosovo.

The leaders in the region have condemned the violence and say that they want to be responsible partners of the international community and join the European institutions as soon as possible. But they have so far failed to take many of the difficult steps necessary to realize their ambitions, above all the full implementation of the provisions of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

We are disappointed that the recent declaration on Kosovo passed by the Parliament of Serbia laid the blame for the failure to implement resolution 1244 (1999) solely on the side of the ethnic Albanians. Clearly, both sides have failed to meet their obligations. For example, the creation of illegal parallel structures in northern Kosovo and in Serbian enclaves elsewhere has been a major impediment to implementing resolution 1244 (1999). Moreover, it was disappointing that the parliamentary declaration said nothing about the interests and needs of the ethnic Albanians, who make up the overwhelming majority of the residents of Kosovo.

On the other hand, we urge the representatives of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Kosovo to continue to speak out against violence, to do more to promote ethnic tolerance and to encourage the acceptance of the rule of law. That is the only way to create a more favourable climate for refugee returns. Ending violence and ethnic intimidation is the most important element of progress. Another critical element is the need for direct dialogue between Priština and Belgrade about how they can best cooperate on practical issues. We hope that this dialogue will begin soon. This does not mean the talks about the final status of Kosovo, which can take place only when standards of democratic practice and ethnic tolerance have been achieved.

We have high expectations for the programme of action of the new Special Representative of the

Secretary-General, and we fully support his priorities. In that connection, we are eager to receive the operationalized benchmarks and work plan, which will lay out the concrete tasks to be achieved over the coming months.

**Mr. Tidjani** (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would also like to thank Mr. Annabi for his briefing containing up-to-date and very useful information. On 18 August 2003, the Security Council, in complete unanimity, condemned the unjustifiable and often lethal incidents described by Mr. Annabi. The Council firmly called for finding the perpetrators and bringing them to justice so that they can be held accountable for their crimes. I welcome the mobilization that seems to be growing among the population today, to help the police in their investigations.

I also recall that on 3 July 2003, Mr. Steiner presented to the Council the most recent report of the Secretary-General on Kosovo (S/2003/675). It was an exhaustive assessment of the efforts of the United Nations to normalize the situation in the province. That assessment, although largely positive, did include some reasons for concern due to certain problems that Mr. Steiner underlined in his introductory briefing on that day. Those problems have grown since then, as we noted in Mr. Annabi's statement today. My delegation believes that those problems stem from the persistence of intolerance, hatred and instinctual reactions based on identity, which fuel partisan rivalry, injustice, violence and, as a result, insecurity.

The population of Kosovo dreams of peace and a reconciled society of solidarity that shares a common vision of happiness. As well, as the Council observed on the ground last month, the population is aware of the international community's firm commitment and of the enormous sacrifices its men and women make out of goodwill. Those men and women work with the population day by day with determination to ensure the stabilization and reconstruction of Kosovo and the reconciliation of the entire population. Establishing a safe environment that has been disarmed and demined, ensuring protection and freedom of movement, facilitating the return of refugees and displaced persons, creating conditions for a lasting settlement of the problem — I could go on, but Council members are well aware that these issues are the tasks set forth in resolution 1244 (1999). All of those objectives disturb the extremists on all sides, who are pleased only when the situation is confused and out of control.

It is the United Nations that has established conditions that have given rise to, or strengthened, the hopes and dreams of the Kosovars. Over and above the duties imposed on it by the Charter, the Organization has a specific moral commitment to successfully conclude its mission in Kosovo. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Harri Holkeri, has stated that the incidents in question will only strengthen our resolve to establish the rule of law for the people of Kosovo.

In this regard, the Special Representative needs the firm support of the United Nations if he is to be successful in addressing the priorities for 2003 that his predecessor, Mr. Steiner, set out and that the Council welcomed. Kosovo is at a delicate stage and the Security Council, with the customary support of Secretary-General Kofi Annan and his Special Representative, must tailor its strategy and the modalities of its implementation by ensuring that its activities in the province are focused on the long term. We must therefore ensure that we know what the people of Kosovo truly want and find appropriate solutions that will enable us, without acting hastily, to resolve the problem of the final status of Kosovo.

My delegation would like to reaffirm its commitment to the principle of "standards before status" and to the virtues of direct dialogue among all the parties concerned. In this regard, we agree with Mr. Holkeri that such dialogue should be focused on specific issues, and we look forward to the proposals for modalities for that dialogue. My delegation also reaffirms its commitment to a multi-ethnic and multicultural Kosovo nourished by the human values of tolerance and harmony and watered by the source of democratic values and respect for human rights.

My delegation appeals to all the elements of Kosovo society and all other political actors in the subregion to pool their efforts with those of UNMIK so as to prevent the further stirring up of negative emotions and to work to restore peace, security and prosperity for all.

In conclusion, I would like to say how much my country appreciates the impressive job being done on the ground by Mr. Holkeri and his entire team. I reaffirm the support of Cameroon for their efforts to implement resolution 1244 (1999).

**Mr. Atleh** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to thank Mr. Hédi Annabi, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his detailed and useful briefing on the most recent developments in the situation in Kosovo. My delegation believes that, despite the relative stability of the situation in Kosovo, the security situation must be further strengthened if we are to prevent a repetition of the events of last month that led to the killing of a number of Serbs in Kosovo. Such events could, in turn, lead to ethnically motivated acts of violence, which would undermine all the progress made thus far.

My delegation reiterates the importance of the rule of law and the protection of the rights of ethnic minorities in Kosovo, as well as the need to combat organized crime and smuggling and to prevent illicit trafficking in arms and drugs.

My delegation also reiterates the importance of the safe return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes and property in Kosovo so that they can contribute to the economic reconstruction of the province. The concerted efforts of all of the people of Kosovo will be required if they are to leave their problems behind.

My delegation encourages continued dialogue between Belgrade and Priština with a view to dealing with the practical matters pertaining to the stabilization of the situation in Kosovo and the facilitation of the political process. We welcome the efforts of Mr. Holkeri in this regard.

We support the principle of "standards before status". We welcome Mr. Holkeri's reaffirmation that he will pursue his work in accordance with that principle with a view to building in Kosovo a multi-ethnic society that is capable of coping with future challenges.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to express its support for Mr. Harri Holkeri, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo. We express our readiness to cooperate with him and with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo in order to achieve security and stability in the province.

**Mr. Zhang Yishan** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Annabi for his briefing. The Chinese delegation has been closely observing the development of the situation in Kosovo. We are deeply concerned about the frequent occurrence of incidents of terrorism and violence recently, which have caused a serious deterioration in the security situation. We urge the parties concerned to find out the truth as soon as possible and bring to justice the perpetrators of those acts.

We call on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, KFOR and the Kosovo Provisional Institutions to make further efforts to strengthen law and order, combat organized crime and ensure the security of all ethnic groups in Kosovo, especially the Serbs. That is the only way to create the necessary conditions for the achievement of such goals as the return of refugees and economic development.

China believes that the fundamental resolution of the question of Kosovo will require consultation and dialogue between Belgrade and Priština with a view to reaching agreement on practical matters, such as the return of refugees and the rights of minorities and missing persons, and thereby establishing a foundation for the ultimate settlement of the question of the status of Kosovo. Such achievements would also be conducive to the peace and stability of the entire Balkan region.

To that end, we hope that the two parties concerned will, on the basis of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), initiate constructive dialogue as soon as possible on those questions and, with the help of the international community, achieve concrete results.

**The President**: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United Kingdom.

I should like to make six points. First, I associate myself with the comments to be made soon by the Italian presidency of the European Union. Secondly, we encourage the very early launch of the Belgrade-Priština dialogue and look forward to practical proposals from the Special Representative, who enjoys our full support. Thirdly, normalization is the best way forward. There is too much political rhetoric on both sides. Unilateral attempts to pre-empt the status issue are not helpful; resolution 1244 (1999) is the way forward.

Fourthly, the immediate priority is standards. I associate myself with those who say that it must very clearly be "standards before status". It is important in that respect to establish benchmarks. Fifthly, as we gear up for those discussions between Priština and Belgrade, the security situation must be a priority. Strengthening the rule of law and building the indigenous capacity of the Kosovo Police Service are vital if we are going to increase the role of, and enforce, law and order.

My last point is simply to say that tackling corruption, extremism and organized crime is a crucial element in building up the multi-ethnic, prosperous Kosovo that we seek. The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo has got a lot of work in hand on that issue, but it is quite striking that the internal market in organized crime in that part of the world is much more effective than is the internal market in legitimate goods and services. That situation has to be reversed if the region is to attain its goal of approaching Euro-Atlantic standards.

I now resume my function as President of the Council.

I have three speakers still on my list. The next speaker is the representative of Serbia and Montenegro, to whom I give the floor.

**Mr. Šahović** (Serbia and Montenegro): At the outset, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of September, as well as to thank you for convening this meeting. I would also like to thank Mr. Annabi for his briefing.

In recent months the Security Council has held a series of discussions that have mostly been devoted to the escalation of violence and ethnically motivated crimes in Kosovo and Metohija. The need for that was obvious. In July, the Kosovo Force (KFOR) reported an increased number of incidents, stating that the Serbian population was the primary target of intimidation. Regrettably, we witnessed even worse crimes in August, including a bomb attack in the village of Cernica on 31 August that killed Milomir Stakic and wounded four other civilians. We view the further deterioration of the security situation with extreme concern, particularly bearing in mind the fact that neither the perpetrators of the Gorazdevac atrocity of 13 August, the killers of the Serb fisherman Dragan Tonic, who was killed on 11 August in Skulanovo, nor the Cernica bombers, have been apprehended. We also regret that those responsible for the 3 August murder of UNMIK police officer Satish Menon have not been found.

The new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Harri Holkeri, assumed his responsibilities and clearly difficult tasks against that background. He has yet to settle in Priština, but we can already discern his resolve to confront the existing problems. We welcome Mr. Holkeri's priorities to establish the rule of law, ensure basic rights and freedoms, fight organized crime, build multi-ethnic institutions and enhance economic development as basic preconditions for lasting stability in the province. In particular, my Government welcomes the new Special Representative's commitment to promptly address the security situation, especially violence against the Serb community. We share his view that the motive for the latest attacks was to send the message that multi-ethnicity would not be allowed to take hold in the province. We support Mr. Holkeri's position that the international community must be resolute in its stand that it will not be intimated from fulfilling the mandate of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

It is encouraging that the international community has demonstrated, at several high-level meetings during the last few days, a common dedication to ending the cycle of violence and extremism. In that regard, we are looking forward to concrete measures against the Albanian National Army (ANA), which in April was proclaimed by UNMIK to be a terrorist organization, as well as to the findings of the special UNMIK/KFOR board set up last spring to coordinate action against suspected extremist infiltration in the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC).

It is our sincere hope that that decisiveness with regard to improving the security situation will boost the thus far highly unsatisfactory pace in the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. Perhaps it was on the basis of renewed hope for minority protection that the 200 remaining Serbs in Cernica — the venue of the aforementioned attack on 31 August — decided to stay in the province. However, we fear that, if crimes and terrorist acts continue with impunity, any future decision by the Serb community to leave Kosovo and Metohija permanently may be irreversible.

My Government welcomes the renewed engagement of the Contact Group on the issue of Kosovo and Metohija. We find particularly important the Contact Group's confirmation in Moscow of the relevance of the principle of "standards before status" and of the need to make the benchmarks concept operational, as well as the emphasis on continuous international control of the implementation of related requirements. Serbia and Montenegro is looking forward to the Contact Group's further activities. In that context, we wish to establish regular dialogue with the Group in order to continue to contribute to the implementation of resolution 1244 (1999) as well as, more broadly, to the stabilization of the region.

The Security Council, the Contact Group and Special Representative Holkeri are calling for an early start of dialogue between Belgrade and Priština. Serbia and Montenegro stands fully ready to engage constructively in all discussions of importance to the daily lives of all citizens of Kosovo and Metohija, regardless of their ethnicity. We expect that the talks, within the framework of resolution 1244 (1999), will help to improve the security situation in the province, enhance human and minority rights and, consequently, step up the returns process. Mr. Holkeri's role in those talks is extremely important, as is the support of the Contact Group and the European Union in this process.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize that Serbia and Montenegro has recently reconfirmed at the highest parliamentary level its commitment to the implementation of resolution 1244 (1999) and its fundamental aim of building a multi-ethnic society in Kosovo and Metohija, one in which all inhabitants can have a peaceful and normal life based on substantial autonomy and meaningful self-government.

**The President**: The next speaker under rule 37 is the representative of Italy and of the Italian presidency. I give him the floor.

**Mr. Spatafora** (Italy): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia, the associated countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, and the European Free Trade Association country member of the European Economic Area, Iceland, have declared that they align themselves with this statement.

The European Union reiterates its strong condemnation of the brutal killings and violence that took place in Kosovo during August and September against a United Nations police officer and against Kosovars of both Serbian and Albanian ethnicity. In expressing our deepest condolences to the families of the victims and to the Government of India, we are also confident that no efforts are being spared to arrest the perpetrators and bring them to justice. The European Union believes that everybody in Kosovo must understand that the time for violence is over and that such deplorable incidents can only undermine the image of Kosovo in Europe and in the international community.

We therefore welcome the arrival in Kosovo of the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Harri Holkeri. We would like to reaffirm our strong support for him in the challenging task of ensuring full implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), which continues to be the cornerstone of the international community's commitment to Kosovo.

In that regard, we very much appreciate the briefing given to the Council by Assistant Secretary-General Hédi Annabi. He has given us a very clear-cut picture of where we stand and of the way forward.

We also would like to urge all concerned in Kosovo and in the region to cooperate in a constructive manner with the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General on fully implementing resolution 1244 (1999) while refraining from unilateral acts and statements that risk jeopardizing the goal of a stable, multi-ethnic and democratic Kosovo.

The European Union fully supports the United Nations weapons amnesty programme launched on 1 September by Mr. Holkeri and shares his views that "the people of Kosovo should seize this opportunity to help themselves while helping Kosovo" and that "the values of tolerance and democracy are the foundation of a free society".

Kosovo must comply with international and European standards as soon as possible. That goal can be achieved only through the active cooperation of all the stakeholders in Kosovo and the region. We therefore urge the leadership in Belgrade and Priština to launch without further delay a direct dialogue on practical issues of mutual interest. That is a

prerequisite to building mutual confidence, as was announced at the European Union's Western Balkans summit held at Thessaloniki on 21 June.

The European Union will ensure that Kosovo's European prospects are not held back by the final status issue. Before addressing that issue, however, a democratic, multi-ethnic and multicultural Kosovo guaranteeing full respect for the rule of law and for human and minority rights will have to be built. To that end, the European Union reiterates its support for the "standards before status" strategy, which now needs to become operational.

The European Union is also firmly committed to supporting Kosovo's economic recovery and development, including the privatization process, as an indispensable measure for ensuring the normalization and development of society. At the same time, we would like to see progress on decentralization and on the return process, where there is still an urgent need for concrete measures to be taken by the competent authorities, both at the central and local levels.

**The President**: I call on the representative of Albania.

**Mr. Nesho** (Albania): At the outset, Sir, allow me to express our delegation's appreciation for your commitment to the problems of our region and to commend your work as the President of the Security Council for the month of September.

Let me also thank Assistant Secretary-General Annabi for his comprehensive briefing today.

The issue of Kosovo has been broadly discussed in the Security Council. This reflects the commitment and the seriousness of the international community in implementing Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and ensuring a sustainable democratic future for Kosovo.

The attention that the Kosovo issue has attracted constitutes a positive factor that has accelerated the rhythm of significant transformations towards a multi-ethnic, democratic society. While evaluating the current situation in Kosovo, as a result of considerable transformations due to the commendable work of the United Nations and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, we are confident in saying that substantial progress has been achieved. This conclusion has been realistically highlighted by the members of the Security Council and reflected in the reports of the Secretary-General as well.

It is important to put special emphasis on the establishment and functioning of the new Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, which are a clear indication of growing political maturity and responsibility. There is an improved inter-ethnic environment as well, as has been demonstrated, for instance, by the appeal of the Kosovar leaders to all displaced persons to return to Kosovo and to participate in the democratic processes and in the responsibility to rebuild together a new, multi-ethnic, free and democratic society.

The latest incidents in Kosovo are tragic and intolerable. They should be explicitly condemned and considered to be acts of an agonizing violent past that cannot halt the democratic processes and the irreversible new realities. However, these incidents cannot be condemned either by denying the substantial progress in Kosovo or by using it for political, electoral and nationalist interests. That would impede the beginning of the necessary dialogue between Priština and Belgrade, to the accomplishment of which the whole international community is committed.

Today, Kosovo needs confidence-building measures and not a conflict-feeding process. Finding itself between opportunities and difficulties, problems and solutions, Kosovo requires all of us to become part of the solution and the progress. The far-sighted policy of the European Union to include Kosovo as an inseparable part of the regional reality, drawn up at the Thessaloniki summit, creates real grounds for its rapid integration, first, into the regional community, and then into the European family.

The improvement of stability and progress suggests the need for the Kosovar leadership to take part in the discussions of this body on Kosovo so that it may share responsibilities and be fully committed to the implementation of Security Council decisions.

The Albanian Government has always appreciated the important work of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for Kosovo and is thankful for the extraordinary results achieved in a relatively short period of time. The Albanian Government commends the appointment of Mr. Harri Holkeri as Special Representative and will support his activity. My Government strongly believes that his mission will be carried out successfully and contribute

to the further development of Kosovo and the implementation of the necessary standards before status.

Albania has encouraged the political leaders in Kosovo and Belgrade to give concrete expression to their commitment to initiate a dialogue on technical issues. My Government considers unacceptable and unhelpful every effort that goes beyond the stabilizing framework of the dialogue and increases the spirit of conflict in the region.

The dialogue between the two parties and the collaboration of mutual interests towards economic development and regional integration will bring an understanding of new realities. People can be ruled not by the mentality of territories, but by that of respect for their right to self-determination, freedom and democracy — ideas that shape modern Europe today.

**The President**: There are no more speakers on my list.

I thank my colleagues for their contributions, especially Assistant Secretary-General Annabi — not just for his contribution, but also for what it represents in terms of the work that the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo does.

We have all shown today, I think, our clear support for the Special Representative. Resolution 1244 (1999) remains the basis of policy and there has been a clear emphasis on standards before status. As for dialogue, most speakers have endorsed what is taking place and expressed the imperative of tackling the security situation and of stabilizing things. The recent attacks have been condemned by just about everybody.

We have thus concluded the Security Council's consideration of the item on its agenda.

*The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.*